

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BEIRUT 04110 221237Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 NEAE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00
INRE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 IO-13
ACDA-07 /071 W
-----000189 221239Z /53

O R 221155Z AUG 77
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4954
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 4110

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS, LE
SUBJECT: SHOOTING INCIDENT IN CHOUF

1. A NUMBER OF LEBANESE WERE KILLED AUGUST 21
DURING GUN BATTLE AROUND CHURCH IN MIXED CHRISTIAN-
DRUZE VILLAGE OF BRIH IN CHOUF, WHERE REQUIEM MASS
WAS BEING CELEBRATED FOR LOCAL INHABITANT KILLED
FORTH DAYS EARLIER BY SYRIANS AT ROADBLOCK. SEVERAL
VERSIONS OF LATEST INCIDENT HAVE BEEN REPORTED.

2. ACCORDING TO COMMUNIQUE OF ARAB SECURITY FORCE
(ASF): "AT 1200 HOURS ON AUGUST 21 ARMED ALTERCATION
MOTIVATED BY LOCAL PARTISAN CONCERNS OCCURRED AT BRIH
... ASF INTERVENED AND PUT END TO ALTERCATION. ASF
SURROUNDED VILLAGE AND MADE HOUSE-TO-HOUSE SEARCH.
INCIDENT ENDED WITH TOTAL OF 15 VICTIMS OF WHOM
SEVERAL WERE KILLED. SOME PEOPLE WERE ARRESTED."

3. ACCORDING TO AN NAHAR, INCIDENT BEGAN WHEN
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"ATTACKERS" SET FIRE TO HOUSE AS WELL AS TO THREE OR
FOUR CARS NEAR CHURCH. AN NAHAR QUOTED "RELIABLE
EYE WITNESSES" AS SAYING PEOPLE IN CHURCH SUFFERED
10 KILLED AND 15 WOUNDED, WHILE "ATTACKERS" SUFFERED
THREE KILLED AND FOUR WOUNDED.

4. ACCORDING TO PHALANGIST VOICE OF LEBANON, ARMED

MEN AFFILIATED WITH WALID JUMBLATT'S PROGRESSIVE SOCIALIST PARTY (PSP) FIRED ON PEOPLE IN CHURCH AS THEY LEFT TO INQUIRE ABOUT ELECTRICITY BREAKDOWN WHICH HAD INTERRUPTED SERVICE. BROADCAST SAID THERE WERE TOTAL OF 11 KILLED AND 20 WOUNDED.

5. SPOKESMAN FOR PSP, HOWEVER, DECLARED THAT INCIDENT BEGAN WHEN PEOPLE IN REQUIEM MASS PROCESSION FIRED SHOTS IN AIR AS IS CUSTOM IN LEBANON. "THESE SHOTS WERE THEN AIMED AT PART OF VILLAGE INHABITED BY DRUZES, WHERE THREE PEOPLE WERE KILLED AND TWO WOUNDED." PSP THEN ALERTED ASF WHICH CAME AND RESTORED ORDER, SPOKESMAN SAID.

6. MAYOR OF DAYR EL QAMAR, MAIN CHRISTIAN VILLAGE IN CHOUF, TOLD DATT PRIVATELY THAT THERE WERE 13 KILLED (10 CHRISTIANS, 3 DRUZES) AND 20 WOUNDED. HIS DESCRIPTION OF INCIDENT GENERALLY FOLLOWED THAT OF AN NAHAR AND VOICE OF LEBANON.

7. COMMENT: INCIDENT DEMONSTRATES CONTINUING RISKS OF BREAKDOWN IN SECURITY AS LONG AS CIVILIANS HAVE LARGE QUANTITIES OF ARMS AND LEBANESE ARMY HAS NOT BEEN RECONSTRUCTED. ALTHOUGH THERE ARE SEVERAL SYRIAN BATTALIONS AND ONE SAUDI COMPANY IN CHOUF, THESE FORCES ARE NOT ABLE TO MAINTAIN ORDER
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IN EVERY OUTLYING VILLAGE. ASF HAS, HOWEVER, SUCCEEDED IN PREVENTING FIGHTING IN BRIH FROM SPREADING TO OTHER VILLAGES. MOREOVER, STRONG INFLUENCE WHICH WALID JUMBLATT AND CAMILLE CHAMOUN EXERCISE OVER THEIR FOLLOWERS MAY PREVENT FURTHER FIGHTING IN BRIH AT LEAST FOR TIME BEING
PARKER

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Control Number: n/a
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Sent Date: 22-Aug-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
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Disposition Reason:
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